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HEALTH DEPARTMENTS EARN EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS RECOGNITION
Thirteen Local Public Health Agencies Honored for Emergency Planning

Milwaukee, WI – The Milwaukee/Waukesha County Consortium for Emergency Public Health Preparedness was recognized by the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) for being ready to handle large scale public health emergencies.

The consortium, which consists of the 13 local public health agencies in Milwaukee and Waukesha Counties, submitted an extensive application and received honors through the Project Public Health Ready initiative that NACCHO is conducting with support from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The consortium won the award because it effectively demonstrated that member agencies are prepared to work collaboratively to handle bioterrorism events, new epidemics, natural disasters and other public health related emergencies, which was accomplished by drafting a comprehensive preparedness plan, developing a competent workforce to handle public health crises, and conducting preparedness exercises and other complex simulated drills. It was a rigorous year-long evaluation process.

Darren Rausch, chair of the consortium and head of Greenfield's Public Health Department, said, "This honor is exceedingly well deserved. It reflects the tremendous effort, dedication, creativity and cooperation that our entire team of consortium experts demonstrated to ensure that public health professionals across jurisdictional boundaries are ready to assist residents in a time of need."

"Public health emergencies do not stop as you leave one community and enter another, which is why consortium members have been committed to developing an effective emergency response plan to cover the metropolitan area," announced Jackie Ove, South Milwaukee Health Officer, and consortium vice-chairperson. "Residents living in Milwaukee and Waukesha Counties should be proud of their local public health departments for participating in the consortium and its preparedness activities."

"Each of these departments is a model of public health preparedness," stated NACCHO's Executive Director Robert Pestronk. "The thirteen departments within these two counties have shown exemplary leadership and multi-pronged achievement in the hard work of emergency preparedness."

Since 2006, only 270 local public health agencies across the nation have received recognition from NACCHO for being ready to handle public health emergencies. Currently, there are approximately 2,800 public health departments operating in the United States.

For more information about the consortium or the recognition that it received, please call Darren Rausch at (414) 329-5275. Additional information about the Project Public Health Ready initiative can be found on-line at: <http://naccho.org/topics/emergency/PPHR/pphr-overview.cfm>
For nationwide graphic: <http://naccho.org/topics/emergency/PPHR/index.cfm>

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